

DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
November 28, 2006

Members Present: Morris, Ennis, Carroll, Endres, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Spitzfaden, Wasson and Webb.

Members Excused: Thompson, Timberman and Newstadt

Staff Present: Davila, Reid, Groff and Dunning

Guests: Richard Citron (VA Medical Center Director) and Steve Gallerizzo (VA Medical Center Associate Director of Operations), Arlo Courter, M.D. (Veteran of the USAF Medical Corps), Sandra Groff, (Veterans Home Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer), Kimberly Lewis (CWP, Vocational Rehab. Specialist), Sarmite Tyus (OIF/OF), Jason Garton (Conflicts of Interest), Bill McMullen (Air Force Sergeants Association), David Ramsey and Cullen Beaudin

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Morris opened the meeting by introducing guests.

Mr. Citron introduced staff members Steve Gallerizzo, Sarmite Tyus and Kimberly Lewis, and provided a short bio on each person. He provided a short briefing of the VA finances and projects that are being worked on at the VA Hospital. He stated that Congress has not yet passed the budget and that they are operating under a Continuing Resolution. Mr. Citron reported on the upcoming budget for the Wilmington VA Medical Center, the loss of their network Director, and the progress of the new Community Based Out-patient Clinic (CBOC) in Dover. He discussed the CBOC's in the region.

Dr. Courter introduced himself and provided a short bio.

Ms. Lewis spoke about the VA Compensated Work Program (CWP).

Ms. Tyus is a combat veteran's Case Manager for Operation Iraq Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) and she spoke about the program.

Mr. Garton explained his product (Conflicts of Interest) to the Commission and asked the Commission members for their support.

Mr. Reid introduced the new Sr. Fiscal Administrative Officer for the Veterans Home, Sandra Groff, and formally introduced Dr. Courter. He reported on the Veterans Home positions that are either being advertised or being filled. Mr. Reid spoke about the progress being made with the outreach programs and the anticipated needs of future applicants.

Mr. Davila reported that he gave a briefing to the Milford Masonic Lodge and will be contacting other organizations for donations. He also stated that in January there would be a mass advertising campaign for positions at the Veterans Home. Mr. Davila mentioned the advertising campaign launched for donations for the Home in order to buy needed equipment and systems. The mailing has already started to produce donations.

Mr. Carroll inquired of Mr. Reid as to what the Commissioners could do for the Veterans Home. Mr. Reid indicated that once the Home is up and running, they will need lots of volunteers.

Ms. Dunn reported on the progress occurring with operational policies and procedures.

MOTION BY SPITZFADEN TO ACCEPT OCTOBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY WASSON, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Chairman Morris reported that the Sussex County Chapter of the MOPH and the Ladies Auxiliary both made a \$250 donation toward the irrigation system at the Southern Cemetery.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairman Morris commended Ruth Harden (WAVES Nat'l) on the Veterans Day Service.

FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

No report.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Commissioner Carroll reported that the Home Fund balance as of November 28, 2006, is \$69,453.00. The balance for the Friends of the Veterans Home Fund is \$455,970.00 and there are receipts for an additional \$1,732.00. Commissioner Carroll suggested that the Commission By-laws be updated to include the Commission's responsibility for the oversight of the Veterans Home and the change of administration for the Cemeteries. Chairman Morris made a note of the suggestion. Commissioner Carroll commented that he felt the Veterans Home pre-admission applications were very well done. He also handed out copies of an article about the new Hospice building.

Mr. Davila reported that the groundbreaking for the Boys and Girls Club had occurred.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairman Morris reported on current legislative events. He indicated that things were just beginning to start back up again.

PERSONNEL

Commissioner Lardizzone reported that interviews would be conducted on November 29, 2006, for the Conservation Technician II position at the Bear Cemetery.

MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS

Mr. Davila reported on a centerfold in the News Journal about the monuments in Delaware. Discussion followed about the article.

HOME DEDICATION

Commissioner Harden reported that there is going to be a fly-over at 10:55 am on December 7, 2006, to start the Veterans Home Dedication Ceremony. She also outlined the events that will occur for the Ceremony.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chairman Morris reported that Commissioner Endres requested to be replaced as the Committee Chair. He asked for a Commissioner from Kent County to step up to be on the Committee between now and the next Commission meeting.

BY-LAWS

Commissioner Ennis commented that he had his directions and would be moving ahead to have the By-laws updated. Commissioner Carroll questioned what the timeframe would be to have the By-laws updated. Commissioner Ennis responded that they would wrap it up as soon as possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Wasson (DELVETS) – Reported that his Post held a 60th Anniversary Dinner/Dance on Veterans Day and it was well attended.

Harden (WAVES) – Reported that she is currently working on the “Salute to Hospitalized Veterans” at the VA.

Webb (VVA) – Reported that they sold hot dogs at Boscov’s on Black Friday to support the Challenger baseball league and they made a little over \$1,000.

Kitson (VFW) – Reported that the Grand Delaware Military Order of the Cootie will be having a grand scratch on January 13, 2007, at the VFW Post 2863 in Richardson Park. They will have their Christmas Party on December 16, 2006, at the VA with a small reception to follow. The VFW side is pretty much shut down for the winter.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Reported that they did very well on the Golden Corral event; they made close to \$1,800.

Carroll (MOPH) – Reported that they are trying to get as many members as possible down to the Veterans Home Dedication. On the 1st Saturday in December, the Sussex County Chapter will participate in the Millsboro Christmas parade and there will be some northern members there also. He asked Mr. Davila if the contents of the time capsule have been finalized.

Mr. Davila explained what items will be placed in the time capsule.

Magner (AMVETS) – They purchased and delivered 100 turkeys to the VA. Karen Cavanaugh and the volunteer services will distribute to needy families over the Thanksgiving season.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Davila announced that on Monday, December 11, 2006, at 7:00 pm, Jack Peterman (Levy Court) will be recognizing Richard Carmean and Mayor Rogers for their involvement in securing the land for the Veterans Home. The ceremony will be at the Milford City Hall.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Commission of Veterans Affairs will be the honoree at the Newark Armed Forces Day Parade on Sunday, May 20, 2007.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 19, 2006 (11:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED